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ABSTRACT

Methods and instruments used by teacher preparation institutions in conducting graduate follow-up studies were investigated, and an effort was made to determine the institutions' satisfaction with the methodology and results of their current follow-up procedures. A survey instrument was constructed that addressed eight questions related to follow-up studies: (1) the frequency of follow-up studies of an institution's teacher education graduates; (2) sampling procedures; (3) who conducted the follow-up studies; (4) data collection methods; (5) to whom results were reported; (6) the institution's assessment of its follow-up practices; (7) other groups contacted during follow-up regarding each graduate's teaching performance; and (8) anticipated changes in follow-up procedures. Responses were received from 47 (67%) of the 70 institutions that were contacted. All respondents conducted follow-up studies of graduates; 51% had an annual follow-up of first-year graduates. Ninety-five percent contacted all graduates at some point. Thirty-one percent of the respondents were satisfied with current procedures. Questionnaires or surveys were used by 63% of the respondents. The data derived from questionnaires or surveys were more likely to be considered unsatisfactory than those collected through interviews, visits, or telephone contacts. Several respondents detailed changes they expected to make in their procedures. Questionnaires and surveys will continue to be used, but may require revisions to obtain better feedback. Four tables and a 6-page response sheet present study data. (SLD)

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METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS USED TO CONDUCT FOLLOW-UP STUDIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES

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METHODS AND INSTRUMENTS USED TO CONDUCT FOLLOW-UP STUDIES OF TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES

Increasing attention within teacher education institutions for program evaluation and accountability has resulted in reexamining procedures for follow-up studies of graduates. External evaluators such as NCATE, state legislatures, board of regents, and others, from time to time require data from teacher education institutions that indicate program changes are based on the feedback and performance of their teacher education graduates.

According to the 1987 NCATE Standards, the unit is required to maintain a relationship with graduates from its professional education programs. "The results of evaluation efforts, including follow-up studies of graduates, are used by the unit to modify and improve programs." (Standards, Procedures, and Policies for the Accreditation of Professional Education Units, 1987, p. 42). One of the standards that must be addressed in the preconditional material for NCATE requires a summary of "recent program modifications based on evaluation results" (1987, p. 26).

There is, however, conflicting research results on the efficacy of follow-up studies. According to H. B. Burton (1977), education graduates are the best sources of information for improving teacher education programs. On the other hand Katz, Raths, Mohanty, Kurachi, and Irving, (1981), in their critical examination of follow-up studies identify flaws common to many follow-up efforts. Some of these include: 1) insufficient response rates; 2) lack of specificity of comments (suggestions, problems, and strengths not directed to specific courses); 3) feedback problems (graduate may recommend experiences and activities which were provided in the program but were resisted, not attended or not learned); and 4) sampling bias (represented by nonrespondents or those who

completed the program but never taught). (Katz, et al, 1981.)

As the number of follow-up activities increase, institutions have also raised numerous questions about the models used to conduct follow-up studies and the extent to which the feedback provides adequate information for program planning and revision. Although follow-up studies of teacher education graduates have been conducted since the 1930's (Krueck, 1976), there has been little change in the procedures and methods used to receive feedback from graduates. The three primary techniques used for follow-up studies continue to be: face-to-face interview, telephone interview, and mail self-administration of a questionnaire or survey. (Lindsay, 1985).

Teacher education institutions have a responsibility to themselves as well as to external agencies to gain information from graduates and their supervisors who are in a position to assess the graduate's performance. The question remains, however, as to the most effective means of procuring this feedback so that the data can be used to modify programs.

A study was undertaken to review the methods and instruments used by teacher preparation institutions in conducting graduate follow-up studies and also to ascertain how satisfied these institutions were with both the process and the data received from their current follow-up procedure.

THE STUDY

A survey instrument was constructed which addressed eight questions relating to follow-up studies: 1) how often follow-up studies were conducted for the institution's teacher education graduates from baccalaureate programs; 2) were all graduates contacted or a sample of graduates; 3) who conducted the follow-up study; 4) the method used to acquire the data; 5) to whom are the results reported; 6) the institution's assessment of their current follow-up practice; 7) which other groups or institutions were contacted regarding the

graduate's teaching performance; 8) anticipated changes in follow-up procedures.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaires were sent to 70 institutions that prepare teacher education students. Institutions were randomly selected from the Directory of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1989. Responses were received from 47 institutions for a response rate of 67 percent. All responses were valid cases (N=47), were coded, and data analyzed. Twenty-seven institutions included copies of the surveys/questionnaires that they presently use with their graduates. The responding institutions represented public and private institutions; 39 institutions had NCATE accreditation, and 8 institutions were not accredited by NCATE; and the annual number of baccalaureate graduates in teacher education ranged from 60 graduates to 500 graduates (Table 1).

RESULTS

Based on respondents' information, all institutions conducted follow-up studies of graduates. Fifty-one percent of the institutions conducted an annual follow-up study of first-year graduates; 10 percent conducted studies every two years; 14 percent conducted studies every three years. The remaining institutions reported conducting follow-up studies every five years; one-to-three years, depending on department; all graduates during first-year and again in their third year of teaching; first year and fifth year of teaching. (Table 2). Ninety-five percent of the institutions reported contacting all graduates.

Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with the current process/procedure for follow-up studies; 48 percent reported they were not satisfied with the current process/procedure for follow-up studies; 14 percent reported they were somewhat satisfied; 4 percent reported that their satisfaction depended on the departments' procedures. (Table 3).

Sixty-three percent of the respondents used questionnaires or surveys to obtain follow-up information; 8 percent of the respondents visited/observed first-year teachers; 6 percent conducted structured personal interviews; 4 percent used a combination of telephone survey and written survey. (Table 4). One respondent noted that their follow-up activities included a review of the first-year teachers' NTE scores and participation in a beginning teacher project with a local school system. There was no apparent difference in the methods used to conduct the follow-up studies in relation to the type of institution (public-private), number of annual graduates or institutions accredited by NCATE.

Of the 31 percent (15 institutions) that reported they were satisfied with their current follow-up procedures, eight institutions used surveys or questionnaires; four institutions used visits, interviews, or observations; one institution used a telephone survey and one institution used a combination of telephone contact and written survey; one institution used the NTE and the Beginning Teachers Project.

Institutions, that were satisfied with their current practice, listed the following reasons for their satisfaction:

1) relatively easy to do
2) more personal (observation)
3) classroom visits most helpful for us and the student
4) results satisfy the accrediting agency
5) gives the information we are seeking
6) more open-ended (structured personal interview)

Comments by institutions reporting that they were not satisfied or somewhat satisfied with their current follow-up process focused on procedures as well as the value of the data received. Reasons for dissatisfaction included:

1) poor rate of returns

2) limited information

3) information which is too objective

4) little opportunity for graduate to respond in depth

5) unknown where graduate is teaching and if philosophy of the school matches philosophy of the institution

6) too global

7) not statistically sound

8) too limited to make program changes

9) legitimacy of comments

10) doesn't tell anything

11) single and limited data source

12) inconsistent comments

13) still trying to work out some of the "bugs"

14) data do not give direction for program reform

15) needs to be more specific

16) does not meet NCATE's guidelines for systematic review and assistance to graduates

17) not comprehensive in scope or sample

18) survey methodology is too superficial

A number of respondents made detailed comments which described changes in progress or changes that they would like to make in their follow-up methods. Suggestions included videotaping first-year teachers; interviewing first-year teachers at the school where they are teaching; having a third party conduct the study on the graduate's performance as a way of determining his/her success. A number of respondents felt that they would like to change to a combination of a personal interview/observation instrument; however, they added that in order to do this both release time and money must be provided for the faculty conducting the interview/observation.

ANALYSIS OF FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS

Twenty-seven institutions included samples of follow-up instruments which they currently send to their teacher education graduates. Major differences in the survey instruments were related to format, length and appearance of the questionnaire, type of rating scale, and focus of inquiry.

FORMAT

Instruments represented open-ended questions, a series of statements about the quality of preparation with a five-point or three-point differential, and requests for comments regarding adequacy of preparation under a broad heading such as "Math Education", "Science Education", "Student Teaching."

Length of the surveys ranged from five questions to 78 questions.

FOCUS OF INQUIRY

The foci of inquiry were: general information, teaching competencies, and college/university services. Forty-eight percent of the institutions requested extensive general information in addition to information related to teaching competencies. Twenty-two percent requested limited general information; such as, name, year of graduation, program of study, and teaching position in addition to information related to teaching competencies. Eleven percent requested general information about the graduate in addition to information relating to services provided by the college/university. Nineteen percent of the institutions included questions relating to general information, teaching competencies, and the services provided by the college/university. Eighty-four percent of the surveys requested that the information on teaching competencies not be completed by graduates who were not teaching or had not taught. Three institutions referenced questions to specific preservice courses or specific course numbers.

Surveys were submitted by four institutions which assessed their

process/procedure of follow-up studies as satisfactory. These institutions requested from the graduate: general information, information relating to services of the college/university, and teaching skills. One institution requested general information and information relating to teaching skills.

Institution 1

Instructional Competencies	23 items
Personal and Professional Competencies	7 items
Open-ended Questions	5 questions

Institution 2

General Information	12 items
Teaching Competencies	35 items
College/University Services	12 items

Institution 3

General Information	15 items
Teaching Competencies	45 items
Open-ended Questions	3 questions
College/University Services	5 questions

Institution 4

General Information	12 items
College/University Services	15 items
Open-ended Questions	4 questions
Quality of Instruction-- course titles listed	16 items
Teaching Competencies-- need and proficiency	35 items

There were five basic headings used by institutions to solicit information from graduates on their preservice preparation: 1) teaching skills; 2) planning

and teaching competencies; 3) objectives of teacher education program; 4) preservice preparation; and 5) instructional competence. Thirty percent of the questionnaires listed 5 to 48 statements or questions for evaluation; however, 70 percent of the surveys delineated the area of "preservice preparation" into four to eight categories with three to eight indicators for each category. The most frequently used categories to assess "preservice preparation" included: planning, delivering instructions, classroom management, evaluation, diagnosis, personal and professional characteristics, organizing the learning environment, fostering emotional and social development.

Sample of Information Requested Under Area of General Information

Name

Curricula/Program

Age

Sex

Number of credits earned at degree granting institutions

Present occupation

Teaching position

Name of school/area

School characteristics: Number of students

Socioeconomic status

Percent of minorities

Typical class size

Satisfaction with teaching

Estimate of salary

Racial-Ethnic background

If not teaching, why?

Permission to contact supervisor

Rating overall college education preparation

Sample of Information Requested Under Area of College/University Services

Academic advising

Availability of advisor

Orientation to College of Education

Career placement

Admission to university

Registration

Counseling

Student teaching placement

Library

Facilities of college

Admission to College of Education

Placement office

Instructional materials center

Sample of Information Requested Under the Heading of Teaching Competencies

1. Planning and writing lessons
2. Putting subject matter in a sequential order
3. Selecting or developing instructional materials or media to enhance learning
4. Developing and maintaining effective teacher/student relationships
5. Participate and support professional development activities
6. Evaluate textbooks and other instructional materials
7. Broad knowledge of intellectual heritage in areas of language, mathematics, science, philosophy
8. Knowledge of growth and development patterns
9. Awareness of cultural diversity and how such diversity can affect interactions among groups

10. To develop personal relationships with sensitivity to human values and social needs

11. To provide adequate intellectual development to meet the requirements of technological change and professional adaptation

12. To develop an increased appreciation of the arts as a medium for personal satisfaction

13. To utilize a variety of learning materials and techniques

14. Prepared to solve professional problems for using professional literature

15. Prepared to appreciate and work with students from a diversity of ethnic/racial/economic background

DISCUSSION

This study attempted to review the methods and instruments used by teacher preparation institutions in conducting graduate follow-up studies and to ascertain the satisfaction of these institutions with the data and process received from their current follow-up procedures.

It was evident from the responses that institutions include systematic follow-up studies as part of their program evaluation process. However, institutions employing questionnaires and surveys as follow-up procedures are not satisfied with the process and data.

Phone surveys, observations of first-year teachers and "structural interviews" seem to represent processes of conducting follow-up studies that provided the most comprehensive data for program planning. Observations and structured interviews, however, require monetary compensation or release time for faculty conducting these activities.

In recognition of the likely widespread geographic distribution of graduates, and the limitations placed on institutions with large enrollments, it is assumed that most teacher education follow-up studies will continue to use questionnaires or surveys.

Since the primary purpose of follow-up studies is to acquire data that can be used for program planning, it is recommended that the process and content of questionnaires be thoroughly examined in order to overcome some of the common flaws.

Questionnaires should include background information which identifies the graduate's teaching position, since criteria such as teacher rewards, community resources, and parental influence all have an impact on teachers' perceptions of their preparation.

The cover letter that accompanies the questionnaire should make an emphatic appeal to the graduate that his/her response will contribute to the evaluation and improvement of the teacher education program. It is also suggested that results of the study, with contemplated program changes, be sent to respondents.

It has been concluded by Katz, et al, that graduates of a teacher education program can provide important feedback by which to modify programs; however, in order to ensure that the feedback is credible and useful, institutions must elect follow-up procedures designed to obtain significant feedback.

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SUMMARY OF FOLLOW-UP STUDY RETURNS

TABLE 1

Respondents to Questionnaire

N=47

Public Institutions	Private Institutions
34	13

Annual Number of Baccalaureate Teacher Education Graduates

60 to 99 graduates	7 graduates
100 to 199 graduates	18 graduates
200 to 299 graduates	10 graduates
300 to 399 graduates	8 graduates
400 to 499 graduates	3 graduates
500 ------ graduates	1 graduate

Institution Locations

North/East	7
South/East	12
North/Central	9
South/Central	7
North/West	7
South/West	5

NCATE Accreditation	No NCATE Accreditation
39	8

SUMMARY OF FREQUENCY OF FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

TABLE 2

All First-Year Teachers	24
Sample of First-Year Teachers	2
Every Five Years	1
Every Three Years	7
Every Two Years	5
First Year and Third Year of Teaching	1
One to Three Years	3
First and Fifth Year of Teaching	2
First-Year Teachers in Area	2

SATISFACTION WITH PROCESS/PROCEDURE

TABLE 3

Satisfied with Current Follow-up Procedures	15
Not Satisfied with Current Process/Procedure	23
Somewhat Satisfied	7
Depends on Departments' Procedures	2

SUMMARY OF METHODS/INSTRUMENTS USED IN FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

TABLE 4

Questionnaire or Survey	30 respondents
Observation and Visits	4 respondents
Open-ended Questionnaire	1 respondent
Combination Telephone Survey and Written Survey	2 respondents
Beginning Teacher Performance/NTE Scores	1 respondent
Depends on Departments	3 respondents
Not Stated	1 respondent
Telephone Survey Only	1 respondent
Structured Personal Interview	3 respondents
Survey and Visit	1 respondent

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE SHEET

COLLEGE/UNIV	# OF GRADS	FOLLOW-UP	HOW OFTEN	WHO DOES IT?	METHOD USED	WHO GETS INFO?	SATISFIED	WHY/CHANGES
Public NCATE	126	Yes	Evry 3 yr	Faculty	1st yr-phone all grds/surv Sampl of grds	Educ staff	Somewhat	Meets eval requirmnts
Public NCATE	250	Yes	Evry 3 yr	Assoc Dean	All grads aftr 3 yrs of tchg	All TE facity	No	--
Private NCATE	114	Yes	1st yr grd evry year	Coord Fld Expers	Survey	Tchr Ed Com	No	Low returns Would like to try something more personal
Public NCATE	161	Yes	1st yr grd evry year	Each dept conducts own	Depends on dept	Dean/Tch Gov. unit	Somewhat	New techniq Haven't eval procdur yet
Public NCATE	160	Yes	Evry 5 yr	Member of dept	Survey/Open response	Faculty/ NCATE	No	Would like to use onsite visits
Public NCATE	193	Yes	1-3 yrs	Prog Coord/ Chairs	Each program uses own surv	NCATE/ State Dept	No	Data does not give directns for program reform; would like more focus, less global
Public NCATE	163	Yes	1st year tchrs	Placemnt Off	All grads thru survey	Faculty	No	New review planned
Public NCATE	163	Yes	All grads during 1st year	Office of Lab Experiences	Survey	School of Ed Executive Bd.	No	Poor returns Process of change underway

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE SHEET

COLLEGE/UNIV	# OF GRADS	FOLLOW-UP	HOW OFTEN	WHO DOES IT?	METHOD USED	WHO GETS INFO?	SATISFIED	WHY/CHANGES
Public NCATE	224	Yes	Evry year to begng tchrs in area	Office of TE	Survey grads	Dean/Faculty	Somewhat	In process of review
Pub-no NCATE	300	Yes	Annually	Educ Dept	Faclty visits many 1st yr teachers	Report to Dean	No	Not systematic; does not meet NCATE reqm
Public NCATE	304	Yes	Annually	Dean	Sample grads questnr	School Admin	No	Too limited
Pub-no NCATE	377	Yes	Annually	Asst Dean	Sample grads questnr	Dean/VP	Reasonably So	Gives some feedback to depts
Private NCATE	338	Yes	Annually	Fac member from each dept	Each dept conducts own eval	Dean/Facul	Depends on	Some receive info from interviews; others use own questnr
Pub-no NCATE	311	Yes	Annually	Dir of TE	Grads/Survey	Depts/TE	Yes	60% of respnse rate
Public NCATE	306	Yes	Annually	Dept of Ed	Sample intrv case studies/ personal survey	Dean/Faculty	No	Survey method superficial/ more indepth interviews

COLLEGE/UNIV	# OF GRADS	FOLLOW-UP	HOW OFTEN	WHO DOES IT?	METHOD USED	WHO GETS INFO?	SATISFIED	WHY/CHANGES
Pub-No NCATE	240	Yes	Every 3 yr	Dean's Office	Survey	Dean & Faclty	No	Results have been poor
Public NCATE	280	Yes	Every yr	Each dept	Survey	NCATE-Educ Department	No	Not enough information
Prv-No NCATE	140	Yes	Every 2 yr	Dir of Educ	Survey	Administrators	No	Too limited
Public NCATE	340	Yes	Annually	Asst Dean	Survey	Faculty/Chairs	Somewhat	In process of changing
Public NCATE	62	Yes	Annually	School of Ed	Not stated	Dean/Faculty	No	Respns rate low-limited information
Pub-no NCATE	90	Yes	Annually	Educ Dept	Ltr/Questnr	Faculty State accredt	Yes	Reasonably effective
Public NCATE	107	Yes	Annually	Dean's Office	Survey	Faculty	No	Does not tell evrythg
Private NCATE	61	Yes	First Yr tchrs in area	Faculty	Structd per-sonl intrv	Faculty/Admin	Yes	More personl more valid/ needs fundg
Pub-no NCATE	60	Yes	All grads 1-2 yrs	Assoc Dean	Survey	Newsletter	Yes	Gives info needed
Private NCATE	60	Yes	All grads Evry yr	Off of Tchr Education	Contact stds thru bldg coordinator	Tchr Ed Comm	Yes	Helpful to talk with students
Private NCATE	90	Yes	Every yr	Facl member in Ed Dpt	Survey and visit	College Admin Dept Chairs	Yes	Visit helpful

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE SHEET

COLLEGE/UNIV	# OF GRADS	FOLLOW-UP	HOW OFTEN	WHO DOES IT?	METHOD USED	WHO GETS INFO?	SATISFIED	WHY/CHANGES
Public NCATE	70	Yes	Every 2 yr	Dir of Tchr Ed	Questionre	Deans of Colg & State Dept	No	Limited info
Private NCATE	115	Yes	Every year	Asst Dean	Survey	Admin	No	No response
Public NCATE	120	Yes	Yearly	Placement Off	Survey	Total campus	No	Does not provide adq data Chg to video tapes
Pub-No NCATE	240	Yes	Evry 3 yrs	Dean's Office	Survey	Dean & Faculty	No	Results-Poor
Private NCATE	133	Yes	Telephone survey-first year; wrtn survey 5 years	Dept Chair	Telephn/Surv	Tchr Ed Board	Yes	Eval dept goals
Private NCATE	155	Yes	1st & 3rd year after graduation	Dean's Office	Survey form	VP Acad Affrs President	Yes	Feedback gvs positive & & negatv comments
Public NCATE	151	Yes	Evry yr to beginning tchrs-Genl survey	Asst Dean	Interv/Observ 1st year tchr Surv 3rd year	Faculty Com	Yes	Need to provide release time for fac and money for clerical help

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE SHEET

COLLEGE/UNIV	# OF GRADS	FOLLOW-UP	HOW OFTEN	WHO DOES IT?	METHOD USED	WHO GETS INFO?	SATISFIED	WHY/CHANGES
Public NCATE	171	Yes	Sampl grds each year	Dean's Office	Survey sample	All depts	No	Single & limtd data Need qualitativ data
Public NCATE	142	Yes	Evry 3 yr of past	Grad Student	Survey all grads of past 3 yrs	Dean/Placemnt	No	Inconsistnt no validity low return no standard form
Pub-no NCATE	148	Yes	Every 3 years	Asst Dean	Questionr snt every 3 yrs	Admin/Chairs	No	---
Public NCATE	180	Yes	Every yr	Chairs	Survey	Dean	Yes	Gives needed info for evaluation
Public NCATE	403	Yes	1-3 yrs	Assessment Office	Sample of grds mail/phone	Tchr Ed Com	Yes	Provides useful info
Public NCATE	464	Yes	Every semester	Dean's Off	Survey grds after in fld 9 months	Collegewide	Yes	Useful data
Public NCATE	500	Yes	Annually	Inst Resrch	All grads ltr/questnr	School of Ed	Yes/No	Too much info ondemographcs not enough on programs
Public NCATE	428	Yes	Each yr	Director of Clinical Experience	All grads-questionr	NCATE State Dept	No	Low response rate; tried sevl things unsuccessfly

FOLLOW-UP RESPONSE SHEET

COLLEGE/UNIV	# OF GRADS	FOLLOW-UP	HOW OFTEN	WHO DOES IT?	METHOD USED	WHO GETS INFO?	SATISFIED	WHY/CHANGES
Public NCATE	314	Yes	Annually	Student Affrs Office	All grads thru questr	College of Ed	In generl Yes	Committee studying post baccl survey
Public NCATE	259	Yes	Evry 2 yrs	Dir of Resrch	Sample of grads survey	Faculty	Yes	Provides sufficient info
Public NCATE	221	Yes	Annually	Dean	All grads survey	Advisory Com	No	Would like 3rd party assessment
Public NCATE	214	Yes	Annually	Dean	Sample survey	Central Ad	No	Notcomprehensive in scope
Private NCATE	246	Yes	Annually	Asst Dean	All grads-Performance in beginng tchr progrm & NTE scores	Dean/VP NCATE State Dept	Yes	Providesqualitative component
Private NCATE	229	Yes	1st year & 5th yr of tchg	Asst Dean	Survey model	Dean/Admin	No	In process of review for NCATE